

UPDATE **St. Lucie**



A monthly update from the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners

February 2018

Free Tax Assistance

Trained volunteers with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs will be providing free tax preparation assistance at seven locations throughout St. Lucie County starting in February.

These sites offer free tax filing assistance to those residents making less than \$55,000 per year. Please call 211 for updates. Assistance will be offered at the following locations:

- Indian River State College (Fort Pierce campus / Building B – Room 119), 3209 Virginia Ave., Fort Pierce: Thursdays from 2 to 7 p.m. (772-462-7489)

- Lakewood Park Branch Library, 7605 Santa Barbara Drive, Fort Pierce: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:30 to 11 a.m. (772-462-6870)

- Morningside Branch Library, 2410 SE Morningside Blvd., Port St. Lucie: Thursdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon (772-337-5632)

- Mustard Seed Ministries (Fort Pierce), 3130 South US 1, Fort Pierce: Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (772-465-6021)

- Mustard Seed Ministries (Port St. Lucie), 8311 South US 1, Port St. Lucie: Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (772-340-1406)

- Port St. Lucie Community Center, 2195 SE Airoso Blvd., Port St. Lucie: Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (772-344-4302)

- United Against Poverty (formerly Harvest Outreach Food Bank), 2520 Orange Ave., Fort Pierce: Wednesdays from 1 to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (772-468-8543)

Times and availability may vary, so please call ahead. Volunteers at all of the sites have been trained by the Internal Revenue Service. For more details about this program visit: www.irs.gov and search the "VITA" and click on "Free Tax Return Preparation for You by Volunteers."

SLCTV Grant Program

The St. Lucie County Communications Division is now accepting applications for its 2018 video production grant program. The grant program will award one 60-second video public service announcement to a not-for-profit organization and/or government agency located in St. Lucie County. Grant applications are available now and must be completed and returned to the St. Lucie County by Monday, March 5. To apply, agencies must be a non-profit and/or government agency with an office in St. Lucie County for at least the past 12 months. The grant will be awarded in late March and production must be completed before December. Grants are awarded based on agency need and potential impacts to the community. Grants are available at www.stlucieco.gov/slctv.

Calendar Events

St. Lucie County Offices and attractions will be closed Monday, Feb. 19 for Presidents Day.

Single tickets are on sale now for New York Mets Spring Training Season at First Data Field in Port St. Lucie. The home opener is Friday, Feb. 23 vs. the Atlanta Braves. Catch one or all of the 17 home games through March 25. For tickets call 772-871-2115 or visit www.stluciemets.com.

The 53rd Annual St. Lucie County Fair runs Feb. 23-March 4 at the St. Lucie County Fairgrounds, 15601 W. Midway Road, Fort Pierce. Daily activities include live music, carnival rides, livestock exhibits, tasty treats and more. For tickets or details visit: www.stluciecountyfair.org.

QUICK STATS

Building Permits:

Overall building permit activity for November dropped compared to October with 745 permits being issued or a 21% decrease. Revenue for that timeframe was above average at \$194,478.

Home Sales:

There still no drop in the housing market. According to the Florida Realtors Association, the average median home sale price in November was nearly \$217,000 – up 14% from last year, while condo sales were up almost 38% with the average price at roughly \$175,000.

Tourism Tax Collection:

St. Lucie County's bed tax collection continues to grow outside the traditional season. For the eighth month in a row - revenue increased with November coming in 16 percent higher than the previous year.

Unemployment Rate:

St. Lucie's unemployment rate remained constant with November at 4.6 percent compared to October's 4.2%, and down from last year's 5.6%. Statewide the unemployment remained the same at 3.6%. There were 2,600 more jobs on the Treasure Coast compared to last year with the largest gains in Education & Health Services with 1,800 jobs, Manufacturing with 900 and Retail with 600.